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- 3) Mature Foreign Area Officers into a separate restricted line community.

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE Newport, R.I.

Operational Diplomacy: Rebuilding the Diplomatic Warrior

by

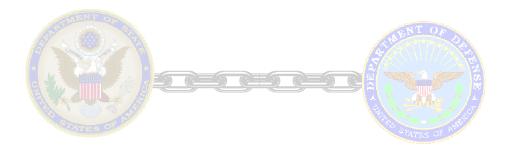
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Signature:		

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Abstract

Operational Commanders are charged with directing military operations in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Traditional borders are yielding to the networking effects of globalization, greatly expanding the movement and reach of people. Citizens of the proletariat are empowered to influence both markets and nation-states to a degree unparalleled in history. Therefore, commanders at the operational level of war are challenged with building and understanding relationships with *individual members* of foreign societies, rather than focusing merely on their governing or military elite. In turn, the U.S. Navy must actively develop tools to integrate the diplomatic and military sources of national power at the operational level; it must develop the skills of Operational Diplomacy.

The Navy Officer corps enjoys a rich tradition of diplomacy. However, this skill set has been assumed away, replacing engagement as envisioned in the National Security

Strategy with mere presence. With an increasing reliance of foreign powers in both peace and combat operations, the Navy must rebuild the diplomatic warrior. Modern technology may link interagency and coalition systems, but personal relationships are required more than ever to truly integrate coalition partners.

Three immediately actionable recommendations are presented for the Navy's consideration:

- 1) Expand State Department integration in naval training and exercises.
- 2) Develop public diplomacy as a core competency of Commanding Officers.
- 3) Mature Foreign Area Officers into a separate restricted line community.

CREDIBLE MILITARY POWER REQUIRES OPERATIONAL DIPLOMACY

Operational¹ Commanders are charged with directing military operations in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Traditional borders are yielding to the networking effects of globalization, greatly expanding the movement and reach of people. Citizens of the proletariat are empowered to influence both markets and nation-states to a degree unparalleled in history.² Therefore, commanders at the operational level of war are challenged with building and understanding relationships with individual members of foreign societies, rather than focusing merely on their governing or military elite.

The Navy³ must actively develop tools to integrate the diplomatic and military sources of national power at the operational level. President Bush's National Security Strategy highlights this, saying, "Effective coalition leadership requires clear priorities, an appreciation of others' interests, and consistent consultations among members with a spirit of humility." While the nature of forward deployed naval forces ensures some degree of engagement at the tactical level, current training and resource constraints limit the ability of commanders to link tactical actions with the strategic aims of engagement through operational art.⁵

Rapid, persistent, global public reporting has served to blur the lines between tactics, operations, and strategy. In turn, many in government have become overly enamored with the strategic effects of tactical actions. No previous international order has tested the skills of diplomacy in an environment where events can be experienced instantaneously and simultaneously by leaders and their public.⁶ Given these challenges, military leaders have either assumed away the vital role of Operational Diplomacy, or worse, simply assumed that

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it cannot exist. Diplomacy is seen as a fundamentally strategic undertaking, holding irresolute mention in operational thought. Continuing in this manner will significantly degrade future military effectiveness.

Recognizing that Operational Diplomacy is important across every military service, this essay will highlight the special opportunities available to the Navy. It will discuss the need and value of strengthening the link between the military and diplomatic arms of national power, propose a definition for Operational Diplomacy, and explain why current training and the vision of Sea Power 21 fail to address this requirement. Most importantly, three immediately actionable recommendations are presented for the Navy's consideration:

- 1) Expand State Department integration in naval training and exercises.
- 2) Develop public diplomacy as a core competency of Commanding Officers.
- 3) Mature Foreign Area Officers (FAOs)² into a separate restricted line community.

THE HISTORY AND VALUE OF LINKING DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY POWER

"The diplomat is the servant, not the master of the soldier."

- Theodore Roosevelt⁷

Because Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) were not professionalized within the State Department until the 1920's, Roosevelt's assertion was not overly audacious. Historically, military officers were the true diplomats for the nation. This was especially true for naval commanders, illustrated by Commodore Perry who opened the doors to trade with Japan in

¹ The use of "engagement" throughout this essay refers to the type of international partnerships and coalition building implied by the National Security Strategy. It should not to be confused with the execution of a combat order such as, "engage target X with guns."

² The acronyms "FAO" and "FSO" appear throughout this text. Differentiation between the two is important: FAOs (Foreign Area Officers) are military officers with special language training and cultural knowledge who are trained and billeted to become experts in specific foreign regions. While all services employ FAOs, this essay will concentrate on the role and organization of the Navy FAO program.

the 1850's. The Navy's diplomatic heritage lasted in strength through the middle of the twentieth century. However, even though a cadre of professional diplomats was developed, Naval Officers were still valued for their skills in foreign affairs. For example, after retiring from the Navy, Fleet Admiral Nimitz was called to supervise elections in Kashmir.

Prior to the existence of career FSOs, diplomatic skill was, by default, an inherent competency of naval officers. The expansion of the State Department largely lifted the burden of fostering foreign relations from naval officers. However, they did, and still need to possess diplomatic finesse as well as an ability to work in concert with their State counterparts; the consequences of failure are dire. Secretary John Foster Dulles and Senator Joseph McCarthy famously purged the State Department of China experts in the 1950's. As the journalist Theodore White aptly quipped, the effect was to, "[p]oke out the eyes and ears of the State Department on Asian Affairs, to blind American foreign policy." Diplomacy as a whole suffered, resulting in a heinous lack of regional knowledge leading up to and during the Vietnam War. As this conflict exemplified, tactical gains fail to produce strategic success when diplomatic and military aims are not properly linked.

CURRENT DIPLOMATIC ENVIRONMENT

The world has developed into an international system, but is, at best, a nascent international society. To foster society in concert with American values, military and diplomatic aims must exist with unprecedented harmony. Strategically, the United States now has the opportunity and the duty to support, defend, and advance democracy and freedom throughout the world. To reach these goals, the United Stated will likely require increasing support from allies. However, a well crafted alliance structure has received little

attention in recent U.S. strategic reviews. ¹⁰ Strong, interagency cooperation and Operational Diplomacy are required to foster coalitions.

While interagency operations imply an effort to synchronize the application of all forms of national power, the relationship between State and Defense Departments is particularly significant. While the Defense Department often has the most public presence, the State Department is responsible for all U.S. government activity in a foreign country. Therefore, successful implementation of American policy in a region must grow from a strong relationship between the Departments. The State Department slowly recovered from the shambles of the 1950's, but diplomatic skill has continually eroded from the corps of Navy officers. In spite of numerous actions taken to foster positive international relationships, anti-Americanism and distrust of the Nation's powerful military are on the rise. Causes for this trend extend well beyond the policies of the Navy, but the Navy can still play a major role in reversing negative public opinion.

DEFINING OPERATIONAL DIPLOMACY

If anti-Americanism is to be dissipated and international trust to be fostered, the strategic goals of American policy must be supported by Operational Diplomacy. Joint doctrine states, "The integration of political and military objectives and the subsequent translation of these objectives into demonstrable action have always been essential to success at all levels of operation." Translated into operational principles - unity of effort and unity of command must exist between the diplomatic and military sources of national power. Yet, joint doctrine shies away from defining Operational Diplomacy. "Public diplomacy", "Political intelligence," "Political warfare," and even, "Politico-military gaming" are

included in the Department of Defense dictionary.¹² To effectively conduct diplomacy at the operational level, one must first form a concept of what it entails.

A proposed definition for Operational Diplomacy is: The use of military forces to develop and manage international relations at a campaign and major operations level.

Operational Diplomacy translates the theater-strategic diplomatic goals of the Combatant Commander and U.S. Foreign Policy into operational design, and ultimately, tactical action, by integrating the key activities of the Department of Defense and Department of State.

Crucial elements of strong Operational Diplomacy include interagency training and exercise, public diplomacy, and a robust Foreign Area Officer program.

COUNTERPOINT

A range of possible arguments exists against developing the tools of Operational Diplomacy. This section highlights the opposing point of view, with the remainder of the essay detailing why these arguments are either unsupported or can be mitigated through the recommendations provided.

Coining the term, "Operational Diplomacy" does little toward advancing American foreign policy. While interagency coordination is undeniably important, the Navy does not need to develop tools to integrate the diplomatic and military sources of national power.

Joint doctrine for interagency coordination already exists; the Navy should not be in the business of making its own. This argument may continue by claiming that Operational Diplomacy already exists under the name, "Psychological operations."

Linking diplomatic and military aims, State department representatives are included in major military exercises. Additionally, the Navy maintains a cadre of specially trained

Foreign Area Officers. Expanding the program may have advantages, but resource constraints simply do not support it. The currently proposed budget for the Department of the Navy already soars to \$119.4 billion. If the recommendation is to simply do more with less, Sailors are reaching their limit from the demands of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Developing additional diplomatic skills within the Navy is a waste of valuable resources. Always deployed, Naval Officers gain diplomatic skills through their normal career progression. Modern coalition challenges are being tackled through the development of coalition communication networks such as Pacific Fleet's Combined Operations Wide Area Network (COWAN) and the Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange (CENTRIX) in the Central Command Area of Responsibility. Transformational programs include FORCEnet, which will further integrate coalition partners. Finally, given persistent reach-back capabilities, Naval Officers will always have the capability to tap into State Department resources if and when needed.

TAKING A FIX

Doctrine

Merely defining Operational Diplomacy is not intended to be a solution unto itself.

For Operational Diplomacy to be successful, it must first address the challenges of coordinating domestic Defense and State aims, and secondly, create the processes with which operational commanders can foster meaningful coalition relationships. This essay concentrates on Navy recommendations, but Operational Diplomacy is clearly a joint concept. Current doctrine for interagency coordination vaguely alludes to part of the challenge, instructing combatant commanders to, "[i]dentify possible obstacles to the

collective effort arising from conflicting departmental or agency priorities." The Navy's Foreign Area Officer Instruction hints at the international side, stating, "Critical regional expertise is a growing need as our national security focuses on the principles of global engagement." These documents fall short of fully addressing Operational Diplomacy. *Exercises*

State department integration does exist in some major exercises, but this link is generally seen only by the combatant commander and select staff members. For example, a State representative will sometimes fill the role of the Political Advisor (POLAD) to discuss options with the Combatant Commander. Outside of Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) exercises, few relationships exist below the highest levels. Therefore, tactical actions are only synchronized with diplomatic policy goals either through ad hoc relationships or solely through a military lens. Unless they fill the right joint billet or are selected as a Foreign Area Officer earlier in their careers, Navy commanding officers have no concrete exposure to State Department capabilities.

Concerning future integration, the Navy's Fleet Battle Experiment program exists, "[t]o update Navy doctrine and Tactical Training Publications, accelerate the delivery of innovative warfare capabilities to the fleet, identify concept based requirements, and evaluate new operational capabilities." Unfortunately, these exercises turn a blind eye toward the process of using interagency coordination to develop international relationships.

Transformation

The Navy's vision for transformation, Sea Power 21, tackles coalition system integration; it does not address coalition *development*. Technical solutions such as COWAN and CENTRIX are crucial toward coalition integration, but they do not obviate the need for

building personal relationships with both military and civilian foreigners. FORCEnet development to date has focused primarily on communications systems. These efforts fail to meet the true vision of FORCEnet, which emphasizes the prominence of warrior integration with systems, not merely systems with each other. Technological development is needed, but it is also the simpler and less important requirement for coalition building. The ability to perform reach-back does not equate to the value of engagement forward.

Psychological Operations

Psychological operations are, "Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals."

They are intended to, "[i]nduce foreign attitude favorable to the originator's objective."

Though they rely on many of the same tools, psychological operations should not be confused with Operational Diplomacy, which differs in two vital ways. First, it recognizes that influence flows in both directions; foreign governments may, in fact, prompt positive changes in American behavior. Secondly, with Operational Diplomacy, the relationship *is* the objective, not merely a means of reaching one.

Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy comprises a key portion of Operational Diplomacy. Unfortunately, the United States is suffering from a public diplomacy crisis. ¹⁸ In spite of numerous programs to build coalitions and provide aid throughout government, America is commonly branded with unilateralist tendencies. Strategically, senior officials must accept that public diplomacy is an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. ¹⁹ If the international community is to be convinced by Secretary Powell's argument that, "Above all, the President's strategy is one of

partnerships,"²⁰ then the Nation must do a better job sharing and explaining its ideals. Because the military is an extension of policy, logic follows that the armed forces should likewise be in the business of partnership building. Public diplomacy is a required commodity. The target audience includes both civilian and military members of foreign societies.

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS (CNO) GUIDANCE

Through his tenure, Admiral Clark has revitalized Navy training and readiness. His efforts have vastly improved the combat capability of the service. As a consequence, there exists an exponentially growing disparity between the military might of the U.S. Navy and that of its allies. Therefore, issues of coalition integration are immediately critical. Tenants of Operational Diplomacy are mentioned in the "CNO Guidance for 2004," but interpretation of his vision is likely to suffer from the same shortcomings as Sea Power 21. While the CNO seems to be hinting at a broadened diplomatic role for the Navy, progress toward coalition development remains focused on technical issues.²¹

The CNO has challenged the Navy to, "[i]ntegrate additional allied/coalition navies into deploying CSG [Carrier Strike Group], ESG [Expeditionary Strike Group], or SAG [Surface Action Group] deployments . . . [and to] . . . [e]xpand the opportunity for additional deployments with U.S. groups by Dec 04."²² While deploying with U.S. forces provides excellent opportunities for true coalition development, most of the actual actions taken to prepare for such evolutions have fixed on communications connectivity. Again, these steps are vital, but pale in importance to the training required to prepare Sailors for their diplomatic role.

Directly relating to Operational Diplomacy is Admiral Clark's instruction to,
"[r]eview attaché manning and Foreign Area Officer program . . . [and to] . . . [r]ecommend options to optimize Navy and Cultural expertise." The CNO's vision is positive, but not complete. Just as important as it is for Sailors to understand other cultures is their ability to facilitate other cultures understanding America. The ability to optimize a two-way exchange requires specific training that is not offered in the current model of mere presence resulting from overseas steaming and foreign port visits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Traditional strategic diplomacy is neither quick nor deft enough to address modern diplomatic challenges.²⁴ Joint doctrine must address the vital role of Operational Diplomacy. The Navy has an opportunity to take a leading role in expanding the tools required to meet these requirements. Being forward deployed does not equate to possessing diplomatic skill. However, the Navy's international presence does accentuate the need for its commanders to be endowed with greater diplomatic aptitude than currently exists within their cohort.

Operational Diplomacy requires both domestic integration in the form of interagency coordination and international integration assisted by specially trained personnel. Tactical actions resulting in strategic effects have become an accepted part of military operations. Though this phenomenon is sometimes unavoidable, it should not be traded in as an excuse for dismissing the translating function of operational art. Action must be taken immediately in order to secure future coalition support and prevent the type of crises that can be caused by disparate diplomatic and military aims.

Expand State Department integration in naval training and exercises.

Outside a select few in the combatant commander's staff, naval officers are unaware of any interaction with the State Department in current exercises. If regional expertise is the cornerstone of a commander's ability to comprehend the battlefield, ²⁵ then the commander must be well versed in the Department responsible for gaining that expertise. Military operational and tactical commanders must be imbued with an appreciation of State Department capabilities if they are to positively contribute to diplomatic goals. Furthermore, building familiarity down to the tactical level will enhance the interagency relationship at operational and strategic levels. Specific recommendations include:

Increase the number of Foreign Service Officers involved with training and exercises.

During exercises, FSOs could control the changing geopolitical environment and provide training down through tactical command (platform level commanding officer).

Conduct an Officer exchange.

Naval Officers and junior FSOs would gain mutual understanding of each others' capabilities. This program may expand beyond routine exercises, but is not intended to build more FAOs. For example, a Naval Officer could spend a month in an embassy during a time when they would otherwise be at a lull in their training cycle. An FSO could experience life underway with a ship during routine workups.

Fully integrate Navy FAOs into exercises.

Currently, the Navy's cadre of officers who have undergone in-depth diplomatic training are generally not available for ships engaged in stateside workups. Their detailing process should be changed in order to take full advantage of the training they could offer.

Develop Public Diplomacy as a core competency of Commanding Officers.

Public diplomacy comprises, "[t]hose overt international public information activities of the U.S. Government designed to promote U.S. foreign policy operations by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences . . . and broaden the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their culture abroad."²⁶ Traditional guidance calls for commanding officers to promote a positive image of the United States while in foreign ports.²⁷ Furthermore, each officer is expected to have an understanding of any alliance of which the United States is a member and know the essentials of any foreign agreement which affect the national security of the United States.²⁸ However, these maxims do not fully appreciate the breadth and importance of active public diplomacy.

A common criticism of American foreign policy is that it relies too heavily on military, vice, soft power. Soft power focuses on the actions of persuasion rather than coercion. Military officers engaged in public diplomacy implement the goals of soft power without losing the option of force. President Bush stated that, "[t]he presence of American forces overseas is one of the most profound symbols of the U.S. commitments to allies and friends." This does not imply that commanding officers should be expected to take the place of professional diplomats. As tactical commanders, they may not create foreign policy, but they can champion it. Specific recommendations include:

Integrate Public Diplomacy into the Command training pipeline.

Given the facts that a retired General is serving as arguably the most effective

Secretary of State in years and retired Admiral Prueher recently served as Ambassador to

China, a misconception sometimes forms that the skills of a professional diplomat are
inherent to the military officer corps. However, since diplomatic skill requires both practice

and training, a retired officer cannot be assumed to have the skills of an Ambassador.

Because their responsibilities will undoubtedly entail coordination with foreign partners,

Commanding Officers should receive diplomatic training before they assume command.

Classes could either be taught by Foreign Service Officers visiting traditional command schools, or a special program could be developed at the Foreign Service Institute in

Washington, D.C.

Foster the role Tactical Commanding Officers play in Public Diplomacy overseas.

When a platform enters a foreign theater, its crew receives a series of briefs detailing the change of operational control. "Inchop" briefs should include a detailed political brief given by military Foreign Area Officers or State Foreign Service Officers. FAOs and FSOs would assist deployed naval units in their efforts to practice positive public diplomacy.

Individual effort by Commanding Officers (COs) may be a form of tactical engagement. However, the relationships built will aggregate into operational effects.

Effective Operational Diplomacy requires diplomatic action by tactical platforms. Emphasis down to the tactical CO level additionally serves the purpose of forming stronger bonds between Defense and State Departments, and therefore, the military and diplomatic sources of national power. Finally, as future operational commanders and Ambassadors, COs and mid-grade FSOs could only benefit from forming relationships earlier in their careers.

Mature Foreign Area Officers into a separate restricted line community.

Navy Foreign Area Officer is merely a sub-specialty, vice a community. Retaining their parent service community, FAOs only serve in billets that take advantage of their special skills when normal career progression permits it. For example, a Surface Warfare

Officer may have the opportunity to serve as an FAO during shore duty. Because FAO billets are outside the mainstream of normal career progressions, they have taken on a stigma as "career killers."

The CNO adroitly called for a review of the FAO program. The Navy would be wise to follow the Army's example of separating "Soldier-Statesmen" into their own community. Specific recommendations include:

Establish FAO "Sailor-Statesmen" as a restricted line community.

Under the current model, Navy Officers from Lieutenant through Captain may apply to the program.³¹ This aspect should be retained as it ensures an officer has at least a general understanding of Navy capabilities. Today's process fails by refusing to produce full-time FAOs. Every warfighting community has demands which place officers at sea for the majority of their career through Captain. This leaves relatively little time for an FAO to put their unique craft to practice. As with any specialty, Diplomatic and language skills atrophy in the off-time.

Full-time FAOs would be able to continually improve proficiency and become legitimately involved in fostering long-term relationships abroad. FAOs could and should deploy, but specifically using their abilities as an FAO. For example, a Carrier Strike Group staff would be well served by having an FAO specifically assigned to it. In addition to routine embassy support, FAOs could be an excellent source of advice and an avenue to develop human intelligence (HUMINT) sources for operational commanders. Professionally, FAOs would benefit from having their own community because location and promotion opportunity could then be determined amongst similar officers. Developing an FAO

community is the best way to ensure the Navy receives the greatest return from invested training.

Conduct language training with FSO counterparts.

Language skill is one of the most important indicators of a Foreign Service Officer's or Foreign Area Officer's effectiveness abroad. Language schooling is an intensive training experience and an ideal place to start developing interagency relationships, before these relationships are tested by foreign pressures.

HURDLES

Greater State Department involvement in military exercises, training Commanding
Officers in public diplomacy, and expanding FAOs into a restricted line community would
provide an operational commander with tangible tools with which to conduct Operational
Diplomacy. Significant action toward these changes can occur immediately, or as soon as
natural resistance is overcome. Building the tools of Operational Diplomacy will require
support from the highest levels of government. Interagency training and coordination will be
of little value if not supported by respective Departments. Like the growing pains of Joint
operations, State and Defense leaders must learn to coordinate, vice merely deconflict their
efforts.

OPERATIONAL DIPLOMACY: REBUILDING THE DIPLOMATIC WARRIOR

"We fight terrorism because we must, but we seek a better world because we can."

- Colin Powell³²

In the world of rapid, global communications, perception trumps truth at unprecedented levels. The optimistic assertions of Secretary Powell are too-often drowned out by those ready to quip about America's unilateralist tendencies. Because the Nation both desires and requires increasing coalition partnerships, America's National Security Strategy is one of relationship building. Diplomacy implies strategic aims, which has led many to ignore its distinctly operational tenants. Operational commanders are charged with developing international relationships at the campaign and major operations level. They need tools built specifically for Operational Diplomacy.

Admiral William Owens stated, "[t]rust among coalition partners must be developed before a crisis emerges." More than ever, this trust will require a close partnership between diplomatic and military sources of national power. The diplomatic character of the Navy has been in hibernation while mere overseas presence and technical fixes have attempted to supplant its vital role. The Navy could continue on its current path, missing the root issues of diplomacy. However, this course of action would lead to a room full of impressive technology with no process or person willing to use it. As a result, the U.S. military would become increasingly isolated, reinforcing the flawed view that America enjoys unilateral action.

Operational Diplomacy must be included in Joint Doctrine and have tools developed to accomplish its requirements. The Navy can and should take a leading role in this effort.

Immediate action can be taken by:

- Expanding State Department integration in naval training and exercises. Interagency coordination abroad is significantly enhanced by first developing relationships domestically.

- Developing Public Diplomacy as a core competency of Commanding Officers. Commanding officers serve as the Navy's front line for diplomacy. The skills and processes of public diplomacy should be included in the command training pipeline.
- Maturing Foreign Area Officers into a separate restricted line community. In its current form, the FAO program is little more than an afterthought. Developing the sub-specialty into a community will both serve the individual officers better and produce a far greater return on investment for the Navy.

Professional diplomats are a valuable national asset that the Navy should not try to replace. However, to fully realize the goals of Grand Strategy, military and diplomatic goals must be synchronized at the operational level. The Navy must take a leading role in advancing the instruments of Operational Diplomacy; it must rebuild the diplomatic warrior.

NOTES

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 - ¹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, <u>Interagency Coordination</u>, ix.
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¹⁸ Jeffrey Gedmin and Craig Kennedy, "Selling America Short," <u>The National Interest</u> (Winter 2003/2004), 71.

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 - ²³ Ibid.
 - ²⁴ Gedmin and Kennedy, "Selling America Short," 75.
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 - ³¹ Navy Department, <u>Foreign Area Officer Program</u> instruction.
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- ³³ William Owens, <u>High Seas: The Naval Passage Into an Uncharted World</u> (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1995): 40.

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